



# DISASTER RECOVERY FACT SHEET

## AFTER THE FLOOD – RETURNING HOME

The following checklist is designed to help you get back into your home safely. Contact your local emergency manager to report damages, significant problems or safety concerns. Call 9-1-1 for any life-threatening situation.

- ☐ **Getting home.** As you return to your home, watch for fallen trees, downed electrical wires and other objects that may be out of place. Beware of weakened bridges, and look for broken or crumbling roads and sidewalks. Report damages if possible.
- ☐ **Returning home.** When you go back inside your flooded home, enter carefully and check for damage. First be aware of loose items, debris, loose boards, and slippery or muddy floors.
- ☐ **Beware of wildlife or animals** — especially in rural areas. Floods and disasters disrupt the habitats of animals, and they often move into damaged or evacuated areas. Be careful when moving debris or opening closets, garages, sheds, etc. Don't touch dead animals. Call authorities for help.
- ☐ **Natural gas.** If you smell gas or hear a hissing or blowing sound, open a window and leave the area immediately. Turn off the main gas valve from the outside, if you can. Call the gas company immediately from a cell phone or a neighbor's residence.
- ☐ **Check all exterior propane or other fuel tanks.** If they appear damaged, moved or missing, call for help. If you can, shut off the gas supply at the main valve. Remember to call a utilities professional to turn it back on. Do not use smoking materials, and don't burn oil, gas lanterns, candles or torches for lighting inside a damaged home until you are sure there is no leaking gas or other flammable material present.
- ☐ **Sparks, broken or frayed wires.** Check the electrical system — *unless* you are wet, standing in water or unsure of your safety. If possible, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If the situation appears unsafe, leave the building and call for help. Do not turn on lights or appliances until you are sure they're safe to use. You may need an electrician to inspect your wiring.
- ☐ **Electricity.** Turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. With electricity off, unplug appliances and let them dry out. Have appliances checked by a professional before using them again. Also, have the electrical system inspected by a licensed electrician before turning the power back on.
- ☐ **Roof, foundations, walls and chimney cracks.** Look closely at building foundations, alignments and masonry. Beware of cracks, and bowed or bulging walls — especially in a basement. Note any cracks or separations. If the building does not look stable or "right," leave immediately and report it to your local emergency manager.
- ☐ **Water and sewage systems.** If pipes are damaged, turn off the main water valve. Check with local authorities before using any water, as local water could be contaminated. Pump out wells and have the water tested by authorities before drinking. Do not flush toilets until you know that sewage lines/septic tanks are intact.
- ☐ **Food and other supplies.** Throw out all food and other supplies you suspect may have become contaminated or come in contact with floodwater, along with perishables that have been unrefrigerated.
- ☐ **Your basement.** If your basement has flooded, pump it out gradually (about one-third of the water per day) to avoid damage. Walls may collapse and the floor may buckle if the basement is pumped out while the surrounding ground is still waterlogged. Look for cracks or seepage.
- ☐ **Open cabinets slowly.** Be alert for objects that may fall.
- ☐ **Clean up household chemical spills.** Disinfect items that may have been contaminated by flood water, raw sewage, bacteria or chemicals. Clean salvageable items. Check with local assistance agencies for clean-up kits.
- ☐ **Call your insurance agent.** Take pictures of damage. Keep good records of repair and cleaning costs.
- ☐ **Report all structural damages to your local county or city emergency manager as soon as possible.**



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## AFTER THE FLOOD – STRESS

- ☐ **Take it easy.** Floods and disasters are highly stressful and emotional situations. Be aware of exhaustion. Don't try to do too much at once. Set priorities and pace yourself. Disaster recovery can be a lengthy task.
- ☐ **Get help.** If you have suffered damages or loss, find support and assistance. Don't try to resolve your situations alone. It will help to have someone nearby who can think clearly and offer comfort.
- ☐ **Help others.** If you are ok, watch for signs of stress in others — especially family, seniors and children. Offer to help, even if it's just to talk or listen.
- ☐ **Stay healthy.** Drink plenty of clean water. Eat well. Food and water is available from assistance organizations. Take breaks and rest when you can.

## AFTER THE FLOOD – SAFETY

- ☐ **Dress for safety.** When walking or going into damaged homes or areas, try to wear long sleeves, long pants, sturdy shoes or boots, and gloves.
- ☐ **Stay clean.** Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and clean water often when working in debris or contaminated water.
- ☐ **Stay informed.** Try to keep a battery-powered radio nearby so you can listen for emergency updates and news reports.
- ☐ **Inspect carefully** Use a battery-powered flashlight to inspect a damaged home.  
Note: The flashlight should be turned on outside before entering; the battery may produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas, if present.
- ☐ **Watch out for animals.** Use a stick to poke through debris.
- ☐ **Call for help.** Have a cell phone and important phone numbers handy.
- ☐ **Report your damages and other flood related problems to your county or city emergency management office.** Local authorities need to know locations, how many people are affected and the extent of damage from a disaster in order to request further assistance.

County/City	Phone
Aitkin	(218) 927-7436
Carlton	(218) 384-9149 (24/7) or (218) 384-9144 during bus. hrs.
Cook	(218) 387-3059
Crow Wing	(218) 825-3445
Dakota	(651) 438-4703
Duluth (city)	2-1-1 or 1-800-543-7709
Goodhue	(651) 267-2639
Kandiyohi	(320) 235-5133

County/City	Phone
Lake	(218) 226-4444
McLeod	(320) 864-1339
Meeker	(320) 693-5400
Pine	(320) 629-8385
Rice	(507) 332-6119
Sibley	(507) 237-4109
St. Louis	2-1-1 or 1-800-543-7709
Fond Du Lac Band of Ojibwe (Tribal Government)	(218) 878-7502